



Tips for Healthy Teeth

Rite Smiles
Dental Care for Kids

0 – 6 months



Before Your Baby Has Teeth

Breastfeeding

Talk to your baby's doctor about breastfeeding.
Breastfeeding is best for your baby.

If you can't breastfeed your baby, follow these tips about bottle feeding:

- Only use breast milk or formula in your baby's bottle.
- Don't put juice or any other liquids in your baby's bottle.
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle; hold your baby when bottle feeding.
- Learn other ways to calm your baby: try singing, rocking or holding your baby.



0 – 6 months



Talk To Your Baby's Doctor

- Talk to your baby's doctor about making sure your child gets enough fluoride each day.
- Germs that cause cavities can be passed from you to your baby...
 - Don't share utensils, taste foods, or clean your baby's pacifier in your mouth.
- Wipe your baby's gums with a clean washcloth after feedings.



6 – 12 months



Your Baby's 1st Tooth

- Your baby's first tooth will come in at around six months of age.
- More baby teeth will start to come in between six and 12 months. After your baby's first teeth appear, use a small, soft toothbrush and water to clean his or her teeth. Toothpaste is not needed.

Teething

- Your baby may be cranky when his/her teeth first come in. Soothe your baby's teething with a cold, wet washcloth or teething ring. Don't use a teething ring with fluid in it.



6 – 12 months



Introduce Healthy Foods For Your Baby

- Follow your doctor's or nutritionist's advice on when to introduce certain foods. Start with baby cereal, then baby fruits & vegetables.
- As more baby teeth come in, your baby will be able to eat some solid foods. Your baby will be able to pick up small pieces of food with his or her fingers.
- Limit juice to no more than 4 ounces or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per day. Use 100% fruit juice with no sugar added.
- Teach your child to use a sippy cup or cup at 6 months of age.



1 year



1st Birthday = 1st Dental Visit

- Take your toddler to the dentist after his/her first birthday.*
- Children should have regular dental appointments every six months.

Brushing is important...

- Brush your child's teeth at least two times per day – once in the morning and once before bedtime.
- Let your child practice brushing his/her own teeth.
- Baby teeth are important and need care. Cavities in baby teeth cause pain that can be prevented.

* Recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and the American Dental Association.



1 year



What Your Child Eats and How Often Will Affect His/Her Teeth

- After the first year, your child will start to eat more solid food on his or her own.
- Give your child healthy snacks, such as cheese, yogurt, vegetables, and fruit. Limit the amount of sweet and sticky snacks, like cookies, candy, fruit roll-ups and cake.
- The best drinks to give your child are milk, water and 100% fruit juice. Limit or avoid sugary drinks like soda, malta, and fruit punch.
- Stop all bottle use at age one.* Instead, use a sippy cup or cup. Only use at meal or snack times.

* Recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and the American Dental Association.



2 – 5 years



Taking Care of Your Child's Teeth

- Your child should have all 20 baby teeth by 3 years of age.
- Begin using toothpaste with fluoride at age two. Use a small, soft toothbrush and a small pea-sized amount of toothpaste. Teach your child not to swallow toothpaste.

Good habits start early! Make tooth brushing a routine.

- Brush your child's teeth two times per day – once in the morning and again before bedtime.
 - Your child will need help brushing his/her teeth.
 - Let your child watch you brush and floss your teeth.
- Don't let your child eat after bedtime brushing.
- Don't share toothbrushes.





Dental Care for Kids

Rite Smiles is a dental program for children born after May 1, 2000 who are enrolled in Rhode Island's Medical Assistance Program (Rite Care, Rite Share, or Medical Assistance). Rite Smiles was designed to increase access to dental services for children enrolled in Medical Assistance and is administered by the RI Department of Human Services (DHS). The RI Department of Health collaborated with DHS on the development of this booklet and on education and outreach efforts statewide. Initial funding was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



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For more information, see **www.dhs.ri.gov** under 'Dental Services' or call the DHS Information Line at **401-462-5300**.